
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 840 (File 679, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING NEXT GENERATION CONNECTICUT.

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes \$1.551 billion in new bonds for "Next Generation Connecticut," a capital improvement program under the UConn 2000 infrastructure program.

The bill specifies the purposes of the Next Generation program and requires UConn to develop a comprehensive plan to guide the program's investments. It requires UConn to (1) develop the plan in consultation with various groups, including leaders in the science, technology, engineering, and math-related industries, and (2) annually report to the legislature, beginning January 1, 2016, on its progress towards achieving the plan's goals. It also requires UConn to assess its progress in meeting the Next Generation program's purposes by December 31, 2019 and five years thereafter.

Lastly, the bill requires UConn to develop a strategic master plan that (1) encompasses all of its academic programs and (2) establishes strategic goals and objectives for the university and such programs. UConn must submit the plan, by July 1, 2015, to the Higher Education and Finance committees. The committees must hold a joint hearing on the plan within 30 days of receiving it.

*Senate Amendment "A" adds the provisions concerning (1) Next Generation Connecticut's purposes, (2) the comprehensive plan to guide the program's investments, (3) UConn's reports to the legislature, and (4) the strategic master plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

PURPOSES

The bill specifies that the purposes of the construction, renovations, infrastructure, and equipment related to Next Generation Connecticut are to:

1. develop preeminence in UConn's research and innovation programs,
2. hire and support outstanding faculty,
3. train and educate graduates to meet the state's future workforce needs, and
4. initiate collaborative partnerships that lead to scientific and technological breakthroughs.

The bill requires UConn to assess its progress in meeting these purposes by December 31, 2019 and five years thereafter. UConn must select peers from nationally-ranked research universities, which must conduct the assessment with input from the chairpersons and ranking members of the Finance, Commerce, and Higher Education committees.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The bill requires UConn to develop a comprehensive plan to guide the Next Generation Connecticut investments that identifies strategic growth areas based on the state's research, innovation, workforce, and economic development needs.

UConn must develop the plan in consultation with:

1. an industry advisory board it selects that (a) represents the state's science, technology, engineering, and math-related industries and (b) includes chief science or technology officers from these industries;
2. an independent research and development advisory firm it selects;
3. university academic leaders;

4. federal and private funding agencies; and
5. research and innovation benchmarks it identifies and an analysis of its progress in meeting the benchmarks compared with nationally-ranked research universities;

The bill requires the industry advisory board, research and development advisory firm, and university leaders to seek input from the chairpersons and ranking members of the Finance, Commerce, and Higher Education committees before UConn completes the plan. UConn's board of trustees must review and approve the plan by July 1, 2014.

Reporting Requirement

By January 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, UConn must report to the Finance, Commerce, and Higher Education committees on its progress towards achieving the goals in the Next Generation Connecticut plan. The report must summarize UConn's research and economic development activities, including:

1. research proposals, awards, and expenditures;
2. student applications and enrollment;
3. bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees awarded;
4. industry partnerships, including joint and consortium projects and incubator support;
5. university and joint university-industry intellectual property activities, including the number of disclosures, patents, licenses, new businesses, and entrepreneurial activities established with university technologies; and
6. research and innovation benchmarks and an analysis of the university's progress in meeting them compared with nationally-ranked research universities.

PROJECT AUTHORIZATIONS

As Table 1 shows, the bill (1) increases bond authorizations for existing UConn 2000 Phase III projects, (2) adds three new Phase III projects, and (3) expands an existing Phase III project for Stamford campus improvements to also include housing. These changes and additions total \$1.551 billion in new bond authorizations under the program.

Table 1: Phase III Project Authorizations (in millions)

<i>Project</i>	<i>Current Authorization</i>	<i>Proposed Authorization</i>	<i>Change</i>
Academic and Research Facilities (new)	\$0	\$450	\$450
Avery Point Renovation (new)	0	15	15
Deferred Maintenance/Code/ADA Renovation Lump Sum	215	805	590
Equipment, Library, Collections & Telecommunications	200	470	270
Hartford Relocation Acquisition/Renovation (new)	0	70	70
Parking Garage #3	15	78	63
Residential Life Facilities	90	162	72
Stamford Campus Improvements/Housing (adds housing)	3	13	10
Deferred Maintenance/ Code/ ADA Renovation Sum – Health Center	50	61	11
TOTAL CHANGE			\$1,551

Phase III Project Dates

The bill extends Phase III of the program by six years, from 2018 to 2024. It also extends, from 2018 to 2024, or until completion of the UConn 2000 infrastructure program, UConn’s authority to plan, design, acquire, remodel, alter, repair, enlarge, or demolish any real asset or other project on its campuses.

Annual Bond Limits

To conform to the increased bond authorizations, the bill (1) adjusts the annual bond limits for the UConn 2000 program from FY 14 through FY 18 and (2) adds new limits for FY 19 through FY 24 (see Table 2). By law, any difference between the amount actually issued in any year and the cap can be carried forward to any succeeding fiscal year. Financing transaction costs can be added to the caps.

Table 2: Annual Bond Limits for UConn 2000

<i>FY</i>	<i>Current Limit (Millions)</i>	<i>Proposed Limit (Millions)</i>	<i>Change (Millions)</i>
2014	\$198.0	\$204.4	\$6.4
2015	208.5	315.5	107.0
2016	199.5	312.1	112.6
2017	160.9	266.4	105.5
2018	91.0	269.5	178.5
2019	-	251.0	251.0
2020	-	269.0	269.0
2021	-	191.5	191.5
2022	-	144.0	144.0
2023	-	112.0	112.0
2024	-	73.5	73.5

COMMITTEE ACTION

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 43 Nay 7 (04/16/2013)